

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015LK170
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	Tall Trees Childcare
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	Glanntan, Golf Links Road, Castletroy, Co. Limerick
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<b>Eircode:</b>	V94 P276
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Pamela Walsh
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<b>Service type:</b>	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	12/06/2024
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	109	PM	77
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Tusla, Early Years Inspectorate , Estuary House, Henry St, Limerick
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<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	E Browne M Riordan
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<b>Title:</b>	Early Years Inspectors
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### Authority to Inspect

The Tusla Early Years Inspectorate carries out inspections of Early Years Services under Section 58(J) of the Child Care Act 1991 (as inserted by Section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013).

<b>Conditions if applicable</b>	Not applicable
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### Description of service

Tall Trees Creche is a full day care facility offering full time, part time and sessional hours to children of all preschool ages. It operates Monday to Friday, 7.30am to 6.15pm. It offers an Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) pre-school programme from 9am to 12md. The service can accommodate a maximum number of 160 preschool children at any one time. A service for school aged children is offered each afternoon.

The service operates from a purposely designed, single storey building located in a residential area in the outskirts of Limerick city.

The premises consists of 7 well designed playrooms all of which are occupied by preschool children each morning. There are 5 preschool rooms in operation each afternoon and 2 play rooms are available for the school aged children when the morning sessional services are over.

Bathroom facilities for adults and children are available including nappy changing facilities for the younger children. Facilities for outdoor play are available to the rear and back of the premises.

### Staffing

The registered provider is the owner and manager of the service. There were an additional 23 staff present on the day of inspection.

All staff hold an award in Early Childhood Care & Education ranging from levels 5 to 9 on the National Qualifications Framework.

An additional 2 adults are employed to cover the kitchen and cleaning duties in the premises. An additional 3 adults are available to care for the school aged children.

### Methodology

Tusla's Early Years Inspectorate is the independent statutory regulator of early years services in Ireland. The Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 define the duty of a registered provider to ensure the safety and well-being of children and to comply with these regulations. This Act also gives Tusla the authority to assess compliance with the regulations. The purpose of regulation in relation to early years services is to ensure that the care, safety, and well-being of children attending such services is upheld. Inspections of early years services are planned based on the following:

- Previous inspection history
- Any information received in relation to the service

The findings on inspection are based on:

- Information obtained through examination of documentation

- Direct observation
- Discussion with relevant staff

This inspection was unannounced and focused on the area of governance, health, welfare and development of child, safety, premises and facilities. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

Inspection findings are documented in the inspection report which is first issued in draft format to the service with an opportunity to respond to any findings. Where statutory requirements are identified as not being met, the registered provider must demonstrate how they have rectified the non-compliance and will prevent any non-compliance from re occurring. The Corrective Action and Preventive Action plan (CAPA) will be used to inform decisions about compliance with regulatory requirements. Where the registered provider fails to meet the statutory requirements an escalation process may be commenced.

The inspectorate reserves the right to edit responses received for reasons including clarity, completeness and compliance with administrative and legal processes.

The contents of the report are compiled by the inspectorate body.

### Additional Information

This inspection was triggered following information received from the registered provider to the Early Years Inspectorate.

### Acknowledgments

The inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, person in charge, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

## Part III – Management and Staff

### Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment

*(1) A registered provider shall ensure that-*

- (a) the service has a designated person in charge and a named person who is able to deputise as required,*
- (b) at all times during the period when the pre-school service is being carried on, the designated person in charge or the named person referred to in subparagraph (a) is on the premises, and*
- (c) there is a clear management structure in the service that identifies the lines of authority and accountability in the service and the specific roles and responsibilities of each employee and unpaid worker.*

*(2) A registered provider shall ensure that each employee, unpaid worker and contractor is suitable and competent taking into consideration the nature of the needs of children, including by-*

- (a) consideration of references from the person's past employers, if any, and in particular the most recent employer, if any,
- (b) consideration of references from reputable sources in the case of a person who has no past employers,
- (c) consideration of the vetting disclosure received from the National Vetting Bureau of the Garda Síochána in accordance with the Act of 2012 in respect of the person, and
- (d) ensuring, insofar as is practicable, that where a person has lived in a state other than the State for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months, he or she provides police vetting from the police authorities in that state.
- (3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) shall be carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.
- (4) A registered provider shall ensure that, without prejudice to the generality of paragraph (2) and subject to paragraphs (5) and (6), each employee working directly with children attending the service holds at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Qualifications Framework or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

### Compliance Information

- (1)(a) The registered provider responsible for operating the service was present on the day of the inspection. There was a named deputy person available who was able to deputise if required.
- (b) During the period of the inspection, the registered provider and the deputy were present and the staff roster indicated that this person or their deputy were always available on the premises.
- (c) There was a clear management structure that identified the lines of authority and accountability in the service and the specific roles and responsibilities of each member of the management team.
- (2) The files of 26 adults were viewed on the day of the inspection
- (a) Two written and validated references were available for the members employed to work at the service.
- (b) References were submitted by staff from either their past employers or from other reputable sources.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures received from the National Vetting Bureau of An Garda Síochána were available for the staff employed to work at the service.
- (d) Police vetting was available for the 4 staff members who had resided outside of Ireland for longer than 6 consecutive months.
- (3) All vetting procedures were carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.
- (4) All adults working directly with children held an appropriate qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education or an equivalent such qualification.

## Part III – Management and Staff

### Regulation 10 - Policies, procedures etc. of pre-school service

*A registered provider of a pre-school service shall ensure that the written policies, procedures and statements specified in Schedule 5 are in place for the service.*

#### Compliance Information

The following policies were viewed and deemed to meet the regulatory requirement of Regulation 10.

- Accident and Incident Policy
- Notification of Incidents Policy
- Supervision Policy

## Part III – Management and Staff

### Regulation 11 - Staffing levels

*(1) Subject to this Regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that there is at all times an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the pre-school service.*

*(2) Subject to paragraphs (4) and (5), a registered provider of a full day care service or a part-time day care service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 1 of Schedule 6 opposite a particular reference number specified in column (1) of that Part in respect of the age range of the children specified in column (2) thereof at that reference number is satisfied.*

#### Compliance Information

(1) On the day of the inspection there were 109 pre-school children and 24 adults on the premises working directly with the children. The adult child ratio was correct in the facility.

There were 15 preschool children and 4 staff in the Tiger Room(3-5years)

There were 21 preschool children and 4 staff in the Caterpillar Room (3-5years)

There were 22 preschool children and 3 staff in the Montessori Panda Room (3-5years)

There were 17 preschool children and 5 staff in the Butterfly Room (3-4years)

There were 12 preschool children and 3 staff in Seedling Room (1-2years)

There were 10 preschool children and 2 staff in Acorn Room (2-3years)

There were 12 preschool children and 3 staff in the Blossom Room (2-3years)

Relief staff were available in each room and between rooms to replace staff while taking meal breaks.

There were 2 designated persons available to prepare, cook and serve food to all children attended the service.

### Part IV – Information and Records

#### Regulation 16 – Record in relation to pre-school service

*(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of the following information in relation to the service:*

- (a) the name, position, qualifications and experience of the person in charge and of every other employee, unpaid worker and contractor;*
- (b) details of the class of service and the age profile of children for which the service is registered to provide services;*
- (c) details of the adult: child ratios in the service;*
- (f) the opening hours and fees;*
- (g) the policies, procedures and statements the service is required to maintain in accordance with Regulation 10;*
- (h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;*
- (i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;*
- (k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.*

#### Compliance Information

- (1) The registered provider had insured the following information in relation to the service was on file :
- (a) The name, position, qualifications and experience of the person in charge and of every other employee, unpaid worker and contractor.
  - (b) The details of the class of service and the age profile of children for which the service was registered to provide services.
  - (c) The details of the adult: child ratios in the service.
  - (g) The policies, procedures and statements the service required to be maintained in accordance with Regulation 10;
  - (h) The details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis.
  - (i) The details of staff rosters on a daily basis.
  - (k) The details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.

### Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

#### Regulation 19 - Health, welfare and development of child

(1) A registered provider shall, in providing a pre-school service, ensure that-

(a) each child's learning, development and well-being is facilitated within the daily life of the pre-school service through the provision of the appropriate activities, interaction, materials and equipment, having regard to the age and stage of development of the child, and

#### Compliance Information

##### BASIC NEEDS:

The services management and staff ensured that each child's basic needs were facilitated within the daily life of the creche. A Healthy Eating policy was in place with a 3-week menu plan displayed and shared with all parents. Nutritious hot meals and snacks were prepared fresh and were served to all rooms throughout the day. Breakfast was served to children on arrival if needed. A selection of cereals were offered. A mid-morning snack of fresh fruit, yogurts and breads were served at 10am. Dinner was served at 12md with a pasta, chorizo and chicken dish offered. At 2pm a hot snack was served with toast and scrambled egg offered on the day of the inspection. Mealtimes were observed to be unhurried and relaxed. Younger children were fed in highchairs and older children sat with staff at low level tables and chairs at mealtimes. Appropriate crockery and cutlery were used depending on the age of the children. Childrens drinks were accessible to them at all times, and these were taken outdoors when children moved outside to play. Pureed dinners were served to children who required their foods in liquid consistency and extra attention was given to children who required more assistance at meal times.

Sanitary accommodation and nappy changing facilities were located next to each room. Staff were observed to follow the procedures as outlined in the nappy changing policy for the service. Children's toiletries were stored close to each changing unit and within easy reach of the staff. Staff washed their hands before and after each nappy change. The staff assisted each child to wash their hands using the hot and cold running water, liquid soap and paper towels to dry. All soiled nappies were appropriately disposed of in foot pedal operated lidded bins. Each child has access to a change of clothes if needed. Each room has a supply of tissues and wipes and foot pedal operated, lidded bins were accessible for the safe disposal of waste in each room.

Children spend long periods of time outdoors each day. The outdoor spaces were easily accessible from each room. The areas were subdivided to ensure children shared the spaces with others of similar age groupings.

Sheltered areas outside ensured children got outdoors in all weather conditions.

Separate sleep facilities were available next to each room accommodating the children under 2 years of age.

There was an adequate supply of standard cots available to facilitate sleep on demand for all children. All cots

were in good condition, and all had waterproof sheets in place. Black out blinds on windows ensured lighting could be dimmed during sleep periods. Low level beds were used for the older children, and these were laid out at sleep times in their individual rooms. Children were closely monitored while sleeping and all checks were documented on a tablet device, and the information was shared with parents throughout the day. Rest/relaxation areas with soft couches, small lamp lights, cushions and blankets were accessible in each of other rooms occupying the older children. These areas allowed children have space to rest during the day if tired. The staff interacted with the children in a caring and respectful manner. Staff were observed conversing with the children at their level, using a soft tone of voice and staff responded promptly to their cues for assistance. A key worker system was in place with the details of these displayed on the walls of each room. Each staff member demonstrated a good knowledge of the children’s personal interests and capabilities. Staff supported the children to be independent in their chosen play-based activities both individually and as part of a group.

### **PHYSICAL AND MATERIAL ENVIRONMENT:**

Throughout the building room layouts and designs were arranged to ensure the opportunity for different types of play and learning were available and accessible to all age groups attending the service. Doors to the outdoor play spaces remained open throughout the day and children were observed moving freely between the indoors and outside. Much of the learning and play that went on indoors was continued in the outdoor areas. The atmosphere in all areas was unhurried and encouraging and children in each room appeared content and all were actively engaged in numerous activities.

There were clearly defined, well developed, interest areas in all rooms with age-appropriate resources available to children depending on their stage of development. The rooms accommodating the younger children were laid out with lots of uncluttered, clear floor spaces for the children to play safely and lots of soft floor matting facilitated many floor-based activities. Adult seating in the room facilitated staff to sit and hold the children throughout the day. Open low level shelving units displayed many play materials and toys available were rotated depending on themes for learning and curriculum plans.

The rooms accommodating the older children had clearly defined interest areas, offering ample space for different types of play activities and routines, e.g. adult armchairs, book areas/libraries, home corner and kitchen areas, small world play, and construction play areas. Messy play activities for sensorial development such as painting, colouring with crayons and chinks, sand and water play were accessible to all children. Dress up clothes, hair dressing salons and beauty treatment salons were created with lots of natural props used to enhance the play

experiences. Photographs displayed showed the children busy creating lots of hair styles, and makeovers for each other.

To the rear of the premises a well-planned outdoor space extended the full length of the building. A roofed area extending out from the building facilitating a sheltered area outside for all age groups. Low level partitions separated the areas for the various age groups. Synthetic grass covered all the outdoor spaces which facilitated a safe area for children not yet walking to play outside. Each space had lots of equipment and materials which supported children's play, movement, learning and exploration exclusive to the outside.

Children could explore and experiment with nature outside with lots of areas for digging, planting and gardening. Bikes, trikes, cars, and scooters were available outside with a variety of good quality ride on toys provided. A large play gym designed like a castle structure provided a space for children to engage in lots of imaginative play. Slides and climbing walls extending from the raised platform of the castle provided children with opportunities to develop their gross motor skills.

### Part VI - Safety

#### Regulation 23 - Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child

*A registered provider shall ensure that all reasonable measures are taken to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of a pre-school child attending the service and that the environment of the service is safe.*

#### Compliance Information

##### General Safety:

To ensure the safety of children the registered provider carried out risk assessments on a regular basis in both the internal and the external environment of the service.

On inspection the following was observed:

- All external doors were appropriately secured with a magnetic lock to prevent children exiting the building unsupervised or allowing unsupervised access to the building.
- All emergency exits and fire doors were clear and unobstructed.
- There was no blind or curtain cords unsecured.
- All highchairs were in good condition and fitted with safety harnesses.
- Hot water at all sink was thermostatically controlled to ensure no risk of scalding for the children.

### Fire Safety:

All fire exit doors have a security system which was compliant with fire safety requirements installed, which would alert staff when opened to ensure the safe monitoring of children.

### Part VI - Safety

#### Regulation 24 - Checking in and out and record of attendance

*(1) A registered provider shall ensure that each pre-school child attending the service is checked in and out of the service by an employee or an unpaid worker.*

*(3) A registered provider shall ensure that-*

*(a) no person other than-*

*(i) pre-school child attending the service,*

*(ii) a person dropping or collecting such a child,*

*(iii) an employee, or*

*(iv) an unpaid worker, can enter the premises without his or her entry being approved by an employee, and*

*(b) a daily record in writing is kept of the entry on the premises of any such person.*

#### Compliance Information

(1) Attendance records were maintained for each child who attended the service with details of their time of arrival and their time of departure.

(3)(a) A visitors' book was maintained which detailed the daily record of persons who visited the service other than the following :

(i) Pre-school child attending the service.

(ii) A person dropping or collecting such a child

(iii) An employee.

(iv) An unpaid worker.

(b) A daily record was kept of all adults who entered the service.

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

### Part VI - Safety

#### Regulation 27 – Supervision

*A registered provider shall ensure that pre-school children attending the service are supervised at all times.*

#### Compliance Information

A detailed supervision policy was in place at the service which outlined the responsibility of all staff to ensure children are supervised at all times. On the day qualified staff were supervising the preschool in the indoor and outdoor areas. The layout allowed for ease of visual supervision while allowing children quiet time and space. Children were supervised primarily by sight and supervision for short intervals by sound allowed when children were independently using the toilet. However, the staff were always close by where they could talk to the children who were out of sight.